

REMARKS

This paper is filed in response to the Office Action dated December 30, 2004. As this paper is filed on March 30, 2005, the paper is timely filed.

I. Status of Amendments

Claims 91-122 were pending prior to this response. Claims 91, 92, 95-98, 104-108, 111, 112, 118 and 119 have been amended, and claims 93, 115 and 116 have been cancelled without prejudice to refile. Thus, claims 91, 92, 94-114, and 117-122 are now pending.

II. Response to the December 30 Office Action

Claims 91-122 are rejected under 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by Cannon (U.S. Patent No. 6,786,824). As claims 93, 115 and 116 have been cancelled, these rejections are moot. As to claims 91, 92, 94-114, and 117-122, applicants have the following comments.

Claim 91, as amended, recites a gaming method including receiving a wager from a player, displaying an image associated with a primary game, determining an outcome of the primary game, and determining if one qualifying activity associated with the primary game has occurred. The method also includes associating at least one entry for a shared bonus event with a gaming entity if the one qualifying activity associated with the primary game has occurred, and permitting the player to place the at least one entry with one of a set of entries for a first shared bonus event and a set of entries for a second shared bonus event. The method further includes receiving a request from the player to initiate a selection of one of the entries from the set of entries for the first shared bonus event if the player placed the at least one entry with the set of entries for the first shared bonus event or to initiate a selection of one of the set of entries for the second shared bonus event if the player placed the at least one entry with the set of entries for the second shared bonus event.

Additionally, claim 91, as amended, recites selecting one of the entries from the set of entries for the first shared bonus event, determining a winner of the first shared bonus event according to the one of the entries selected, and if a request was received from the player to initiate the selection of one of the entries from the set of entries for the first shared bonus

event, awarding a payout to the player if the player is the winner or canceling the at least one entry associated with the player from the set of entries for the first shared bonus event if the player is not the winner. Similarly, amended independent claim 91 recites selecting one of the entries from the set of entries for the second shared bonus event, determining a winner of the second shared bonus event according to the one of the entries selected, and if a request was received from the player to initiate the selection of one of the entries from the set of entries for the second shared bonus event, awarding a payout to the player if the player is the winner or canceling the at least one entry associated with the player from the set of entries for the second shared bonus event if the player is not the winner.

By contrast, Cannon does not disclose, teach or suggest each and every limitation of independent claim 91, as amended. In particular, Cannon does not disclose, teach or suggest receiving a request from the player to initiate a selection of one of the entries from the set of entries for the first shared bonus event if the player placed the at least one entry with the set of entries for the first shared bonus event or to initiate a selection of one of the set of entries for the second shared bonus event if the player placed the at least one entry with the set of entries for the second shared bonus event. Additionally, Cannon does not disclose, teach or suggest if a request was received from the player to initiate the selection of one of the entries from the set of entries for the first shared bonus event, awarding a payout to the player if the player is the winner or canceling the at least one entry associated with the player from the set of entries for the first shared bonus event if the player is not the winner. Similarly, Cannon does not disclose, teach or suggest if a request was received from the player to initiate the selection of one of the entries from the set of entries for the second shared bonus event, awarding a payout to the player if the player is the winner or canceling the at least one entry associated with the player from the set of entries for the second shared bonus event if the player is not the winner.

The feature event in Cannon relied upon as the allegedly corresponding shared bonus event is not triggerable upon request of a player, and as such there is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion as to the consequences of a player-requested shared bonus event. Cannon instead states a number of automated criteria that may initiate the feature event (col. 9:20-29):

One or more of a plurality of criteria may be selected to initiate exhibition of the feature event, including initiation at regular intervals (i.e.,

trigger an event one half hour after conclusion of the last), according to a specific schedule (every hour on the half hour), according to the number of qualified players (when fifty players have qualified for wagering in the feature event), or randomly throughout the day. On a stand-alone gaming machine, feature event exhibition may be automatically initiated when qualification criteria has been met.

Further, Cannon states (col. 17:41-46):

As discussed previously, the feature event may be activated according to various criteria such as, for example, a predetermined schedule, or the qualification of a predetermined number of players when the method is implemented with a plurality of primary gaming units networked together.

Thus, it is applicants' position that Cannon does not disclose, teach or suggest receiving a player's request to initiate a shared bonus event, or the consequences of such a player-requested shared bonus event.

Applicants are aware that Cannon also states (col. 18:65 - col. 19:3):

A variation of this shared winning concept is that, for certain feature wins, all participating players (for example, apportioned according to win, loss or play rate) would receive some award--the largest share going, for example, to the player triggering the feature event.

However, applicants submit that this statement of Cannon should not be read in isolation, but should be read in light of the totality of Cannon. That is, applicants submit that this statement does not necessarily suggest that the player requested triggering of the feature event, and would be fully consistent with the statements cited above that the feature event may be triggered "according to the number of qualified players (when fifty players have qualified for wagering in the feature event)." Thus, applicants submit that this passage should not be used as a disclosure, teaching or suggestion in Cannon for a shared bonus game triggered by a player request.

Given that claims 92, 94-114 and 117-122 depend from claim 91 and that claim 91 is distinguishable from Cannon, so too are claims 92, 94-114 and 117-122 for at least this reason. Consequently, the rejections of claims 92, 94-114 and 117-122 should also be withdrawn.

III. Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants submit herewith a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement, with the fee under 37 C.F.R. 1.17(p). The references cited therein were either cited by or to the Office during the prosecution of Cannon, cited against the present application in the December 30 Office Action.

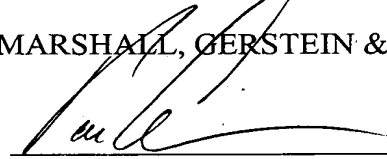
In view of the foregoing, applicants respectfully submit that the above application is in condition for allowance, and reconsideration is respectfully requested. If there is any matter that the Examiner would like to discuss, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned representative at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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